

22

Website directory for Montana artists

State of the Arts is compiling a list of Montana-based websites that promote Montana artists and performers. The list includes:

- **www.findartmontana.com:** the site is designed specifically to help visitors locate artists, studios and art as they travel in the state and enjoy the local culture. To participate, fill out the Artist Information Form located on the About Us page..
- **www.montanamusicians.com** and **www.montanabands.com:** Find musicians, collaborate and stay connected with other Montana musicians. Browse by location and price range.
- **www.theartcenterhelena.com:** The Art Center in Helena is a group of artists dedicated to creating and promoting art. Membership (\$35 annually) includes opportunities to exhibit, take classes and workshops and participate in paint-outs and social events.

For inclusion in the directory, send your web address, a brief description of the service you provide, and information on how artists or performers can sign up to kristi@livelytimes.com. Please put "Website listing for State of the Arts" in the subject line.

ARTISTS' TOOLBOX

Montana Artrepreneurship Program Sign-up open for artists in 13 Montana regions

With a four-year track record of successes that include building a network of artists and helping artists increase their income from art by 150%, the Montana Arts Council's Montana Artrepreneurship Program (MAP) has opened sign-up in 13 Montana areas.

Those areas currently forming groups and the coaches for each are: Miles City (Michael Blessing), Rural Yellowstone County (Jennette Rasch), Pintler (Meagan Thompson), Seeley-Swan (Merrily Dunham), Ruby Valley (Sheri Jarvis), Eastern Cascade County (Pam Houston), Frenchtown (Rikki van Berkum), Thompson Falls-Plains (Crystal Kingston), Big Belt (Liz Chapee-Zoller), Arlee (Marti de Alva), Lincoln (Annie Allen), and Judith Basin-Western Cascade County (Linda Short). The Flathead cohort in Kalispell, led by Jan Shanahan, and the Bridger Canyon group, led by Meagan Blessing, have already begun.

MAP is designed to help visual artists develop a sustainable business in art by learning more about entrepreneurship and developing a framework for their business of art. Participants in a MAP cohort commit to 8-10 months of instruction and workshops that help them create 35 tools for their business toolbox and then move forward to market-ready certification.

These tools include, for example, creating marketing materials, setting pricing,



developing displays for shows, and building a business plan. There are also mentorship and internship opportunities.

This program is specifically designed for visual artists, which includes individuals working in all media, from oils to glass, from leather to textiles and fibers, and from metal to photography. Artists need to be developing a body of work and have some computer skills. The size of each group is kept small to insure that artists receive the full benefits of this learning opportunity.

In addition, MAP participants can qualify for market-expansion opportunities like the recent Tour of Excellence, a learning excursion that took artists to the Western Design Conference in Jackson, WY, in 2013.

An application form is available on the MAC website at www.art.mt.gov. For more information, contact Cindy Kittredge, MAC Folk Arts and Market Development Specialist, at 406-468-4078 or ckittredge@mt.gov.

Book helps ceramic artists go green

Sustainable Ceramics

By Robert Harrison

Published 2013 by the American Ceramic Society, Westerville, OH
\$29.95 softcover

More and more artists are interested in producing work that is not only beautifully designed and produced, but is also environmentally friendly and socially responsible. In *Sustainable Ceramics*, pioneering ceramic artist Robert Harrison draws on more than four decades of experience to present practical possibilities for "going green."

This book covers all the factors to consider, from fuels and alternative firing technology to energy-saving methods, sustainable ways to collect and use clay itself, and ways to deal with waste materials and save water. He suggests simple and achievable methods by which to reduce the carbon footprint of ceramic art, and offers examples throughout of practitioners who reclaim, reuse and recycle in their work.

Sustainable Ceramics is an essential resource for any ceramicist, studio or school wishing to reduce the impact of their practice on the environment. It also contributes to the ongoing conversation on sustainable practices in ceramics, as individual artists realize they can make an impact and take responsibility for their day-to-day actions.

Harrison's book gathers a substantial

amount of information and presents it in an easy-to-read, understandable format. Whether you're setting up a studio or want to rethink what you have, the author shares practices from many professional ceramic artists. He offers tips on how to best select and work with equipment, tools, materials, firing, glazing, packing, wedging, and more, that will

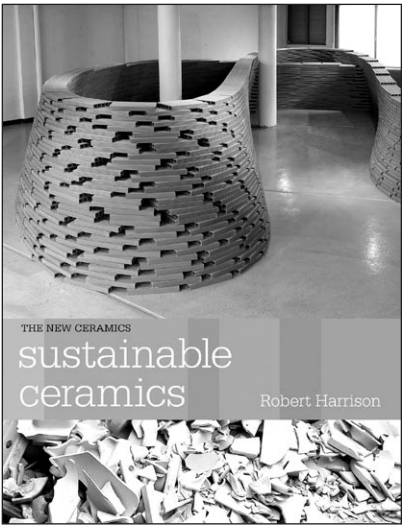
conserve energy, natural resources, and your health.

Harrison notes that the book entailed two-and-a-half years of research and includes contributions from two-dozen ceramic artists who work sustainably. Ten of them are, or have been, resident artists at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena.

"My hope is to get this publication into libraries, studios and art centers everywhere," he says. "My hope is that it encourages others to work toward a sustainable environment."

Harrison, who lives and works in Helena, has built his more than 30-year career in the realm of site-specific large-scale architectural sculpture, and maintains an ongoing body of smaller-scale studio works that reflect his interest in world architecture. He is a member of the International Academy of Ceramics, and a founding member of WABA (World Association of Brick Artists). In 2011 he was honored as a Fellow of the NCECA Council. His exhibition and installation record is extensive and global.

For more information, visit ceramicartsdaily.org/bookstore/ or www.robert.harrison.net.



MAC seeking Montana photographers for Percent-for-Art program

Are you a Montana photographer? The Montana Arts Council's Percent-for-Art Program needs to hear from you.

The Selection Committee will be seeking high-quality color or black and white, high-resolution, digital (or traditional images than can be digitalized) of Montana landscapes, city/town/ghost-townscapes and community/tribal events.

Once the prospectus is finalized on this project, we'll distribute further details of the call and set an application deadline.

Contact: Kim Baraby Hurtle, Percent-for-Art Program Director: khurtle@mt.gov, or Montana Arts Council, P.O. Box 202201, Helena, MT 59620-2201, 406-444-6639

Quick Facts:

Who: Montana residents, who are U.S. residents

What: Request for contact information

When: Please let us know how to reach you by Friday, Feb. 28

Where: Photos will appear in interior sites with a potential of up to 15 images for permanent installation



Dear Digit provides resources, ideas and tips to address digital communications questions from an arts perspective.

Dear Digit,
I know my communications are supposed to look good – I'm in the arts, after all. But, I don't have fancy expensive design software, and I want to do my brochures and website myself. What can I do?

As artists and arts organizations, it is nearly implicit that our communications should not only be clear and engaging, but they should be visually compelling. However, not all of us were trained in digital arts. Those of us who do not always have time or funds available to stay up to speed on rapidly evolving visual tools.

Fortunately, the internet is overflowing with options for every skill level. Here is a sampling of the numerous free tools and programs that can elevate your digital creative capacity. If you don't find what you are looking for below, try a Google search with a specific phrase such as "free _____ tool."

Google Spreadsheets (docs.google.com/spreadsheets/) might seem like a strange design tool. However, it enables you to make a wide variety of visuals useful on and off-line. It could be useful for making contact forms, submission forms, and even data-entry forms (great for volunteers!); also, it's much easier to use than Excel for making pie charts, bar graphs and other data-based visuals.

Infogram (infogram.com/) is similar in functionality and useful for making data-based charts. Both Google and Infogram require you to start a user account.

Easel.ly (www.easel.ly/) is a highly intuitive tool for making infographics. It offers several base templates for visualizing information such as national demographics, flow charts for thought processes and decision-mapping, and even a visual profile of an individual. There is also a blank canvas, and with all the customization tools, you will be able to add text, clip art, your own image files, and more. No user account is required.

Serif DrawPlus Starter Edition (www.serif.com/free-graphic-design-software/) can produce highly sophisticated images, along the lines of those possible with Adobe Illustrator. However, reviewers state the program is intuitive, user-friendly, and does not require professional skills. Could be useful for touching up photos, designing a logo, or digital illustration; no user account required.

Bottom line

Whether we want to include an infographic in our organization's annual report or design a logo for our studio, design work need not stretch us to our limits. And that is thanks, of course, to the same technology that can sometimes seem so daunting.

Dear Digit is penned Bethann Garra-mon Merkle, a Choteau native with a passion for the arts and our dynamic state. She is a communications consultant for nonprofit organizations, small businesses and individuals. Pose your questions online at www.commnatural.com/deardigit.